



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health  
Administration

Southern Arizona VA Health Care System (SAVAHCS)

## Pharmacy Residency Program (PGY2) – Oncology

Accredited by the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists  
since 2010

# Welcome to the Southern Arizona VA!



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## The Healthcare System

The Southern Arizona VA Healthcare System (SAVAHCS) has provided comprehensive, world class health care to Veterans for over ninety years. SAVAHCS is an integrated Veteran's Affairs health care system consisting of over 250 bed hospital, multiple primary care and specialty clinics, two urban community outpatient clinics, and five community outpatient clinics in Tucson's outlying areas serving more than 50,000 Veterans annually.

A wide range of inpatient and primary care services are provided in the medical center including acute care medicine, primary care, surgery, neurology, infectious diseases, nephrology, endocrinology, gastroenterology, rheumatology, pulmonary, cardiology, oncology, mental health, and emergency medicine.

The 90-bed Community Living Center (CLC), located on the Tucson campus, provides advanced rehabilitation and transitional care services, including hospice, palliative care, interim care, medical rehabilitation, neurogeriatrics, geripsychiatric, and respite care.

SAVAHCS is an Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND) Polytrauma Amputation Network Site (PANS), specializing in post-acute polytrauma rehabilitation and case management.

SAVAHCS also offers Home Based Primary Care (HBPC), a comprehensive primary care in-home program provided by a physician-supervised interdisciplinary service, including heavy involvement by Pharmacy Services, for both long-term chronically ill Veterans and those needing short term home care services.

The SAVAHCS Pharmacy Service is a highly integrated, progressive clinical practice model that encompasses approximately 130 pharmacy staff members, including 50 Clinical Pharmacist Practitioners (CPP) in a variety of practice settings. Additionally, the Pharmacy Service is a technology and patient safety leader assisted by the extensive use of robotics and automation.

As a principal academic affiliate for the University of Arizona's (U of A) Colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Public Health and Pharmacy, over 700 physicians, nurses, pharmacists and other health care professionals receive training at SAVAHCS annually. Additionally, the Pharmacy Service also trains pharmacy students from other schools of pharmacy around the country.



## Life in Tucson

Imagine living in Tucson, a city of over half a million people, with a large university that still feels like your hometown. Enjoy warm, sunny weather (approximately 320 days a year) and outstanding outdoor recreational opportunities including hiking, biking, swimming, golf, tennis, mountain climbing and skiing in your own backyard (yes, skiing in Arizona!). The University of Arizona offers an assortment of sports, music, theater, and dance groups that tour the United States and perform on campus. Tucson is situated two hours southeast of the Phoenix/Scottsdale metropolitan area. Close enough to enjoy all the sports, concerts, theatre and shopping opportunities without the congestion!

Click here to learn more about Tucson: <https://www.visittucson.org/visit/around-tucson/about/chambers>

## PGY2 Program Purpose

PGY2 residency programs build upon Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) education and PGY1 pharmacy residency training to develop pharmacist practitioners with knowledge, skills, and abilities as defined in the educational competency areas, goals, and objectives for advanced practice areas. Residents who successfully complete PGY2 residency programs are prepared for advanced patient care or other specialized positions, and board certification in the advanced practice area, if available.

## Residency Goals and Objectives

The goals of the PGY2 oncology pharmacy residency program are to provide specialty training for pharmacists to develop the skills necessary to ensure optimal drug therapy to cancer patients, to analyze and disseminate drug information to other health care professionals and patients, to investigate and solve complex therapeutic problems in a scientific manner, and to further enhance the verbal and written communication skills of the resident. The resident is expected to provide care to cancer patients in a wide variety of clinical environments, including outpatient care, surgical, acute care, and hospice/palliative care setting. You may also qualify for board certification in your area of practice after successfully completion of the PGY2 oncology residency. SAVAHCS PGY2 residency encompasses the required competency areas, goals, and objectives for the ASHP postgraduate year two (PGY2) oncology pharmacy residencies.

## PGY2 Program Description

The oncology pharmacy residency program is a 52-week period of education and experiences that focuses on oncology pharmacy practice and is designed to provide ongoing pharmacy clinical activities while promoting the resident's needs. The resident's experiences throughout the year includes outpatient oncology, surgical oncology, inpatient oncology, administrative oncology, bone marrow transplant, hospice/palliative care, therapeutic drug monitoring, drug information, drug policy development, and also provides additional electives that are specific to the practice of oncology pharmacy. The program provides the resident with clinical experiences in a variety of patients and oncology diagnoses. The resident works with physicians, nurse practitioners, and nurses in providing quality pharmaceutical services to patients and their families. During the year, the PGY2 resident gives presentations, such as patient management conferences, in-services to nurses and physicians, journal clubs, and an Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) accredited one hour continuing education presentation. A residency project is required with the resident presenting a poster outlining research hypothesis & methods and the completed project at a regional or national meeting. The resident is also expected to assist in the teaching/precepting of pharmacy students and PGY1 Pharmacy Practice residents who are taking an elective in oncology pharmacy at SAVAHCS.

## Residency Preceptors

All pharmacists on staff provide direct patient care and assist in the education of the pharmacy residents. Clinical pharmacists and clinical pharmacy practitioners practice in the following areas: primary care, acute care medicine, surgery, rehabilitation, interim care, geriatrics, cardiology, critical care, oncology, mental health, pain, endocrinology, infectious diseases, nephrology, hospice, and emergency medicine. Preceptors place a high value on the residents and are always accessible.

The PGY2 residency program director serves as the primary preceptor for this second-year specialty residency, along with the other oncology pharmacist practitioner, but the resident may still spend time in some other areas of the health care system with other preceptors. This occurs primarily during elective rotations, administrative projects, and teaching settings.

[Click here to meet the SAVAHCS Pharmacy Team and preceptors!](#)





## PGY2 Resident Schedule Example

|                          | July  | August<br>September       | October                        | November                                  | December                         | January                   | February                         | March                                | April                 | May<br>June                  |
|--------------------------|---|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Monthly Experiences      | Orientation   | Outpatient<br>Oncology #1 | Hem/Onc<br>Consults<br>#1      | Bone<br>Marrow<br>Transplant <sup>1</sup> | Gynecology<br>Oncology (virtual) | Hem/Onc<br>Consults<br>#2 | Residency<br>Project<br>Time/ CE | Palliative<br>Care/<br>Hospice       | Elective <sup>2</sup> | Outpatient<br>Oncology<br>#2 |
|                          |   |                           |                                |   | Elective <sup>2</sup>            |                           |                                  |                                      |                       |                              |
| Extended Experiences     |   |                           |                                |   |                                  |                           |                                  |                                      |                       |                              |
| 8 weeks                  |   |                           |                                |   |                                  | Provider Newsletter       |                                  | Surgical Oncology                    |                       | Patient<br>Newsletter        |
| 10 weeks                 | Oncology Staffing<br>(one half day each week)       |                           |                                |   |                                  |                           |                                  |                                      |                       |                              |
| 12 weeks                 |   |                           |                                |   |                                  |                           |                                  | MUE                                  |                       |                              |
|                          |   |                           |                                |   |                                  |                           |                                  | Oncology Investigational<br>Research |                       |                              |
|                          |   |                           |                                | PBM Experience #1                         |                                  |                           | PBM Experience #2                |                                      |                       |                              |
|                          |   |                           |                                |   |                                  |                           | Inpatient Oncology               |                                      |                       |                              |
| 20 weeks                 |   |                           | CE                             |   |                                  |                           |                                  |                                      |                       |                              |
| 24 weeks                 | Management Conference (3 presentations)             |                           |                                |   |                                  |                           |                                  |                                      |                       |                              |
|                          |   |                           | Journal Club (4 presentations) |   |                                  |                           |                                  |                                      |                       |                              |
| Longitudinal Experiences |   |                           |                                |   |                                  |                           |                                  |                                      |                       |                              |
| 52 weeks                 | Oral Antineoplastic Clinic (one half day each week) |                           |                                |   |                                  |                           |                                  |                                      |                       |                              |
|                          | ADR Reporting                                       |                           |                                |   |                                  |                           |                                  |                                      |                       |                              |
|                          | Residency<br>Project (block one & block two)        |                           |                                |   |                                  |                           |                                  |                                      |                       |                              |
|                          | Oncology Pharmacy Administration                    |                           |                                |   |                                  |                           |                                  |                                      |                       |                              |
|                          | Teaching/Education                                  |                           |                                |   |                                  |                           |                                  |                                      |                       |                              |

<sup>1</sup> Off-site rotation: Offered at VA Tennessee Valley Medical Center (Nashville, TN), VA Puget Sound Health Care System (Seattle, WA) BMT units

<sup>2</sup> Electives: potential options include academia, informatics, hematology, ID, mental health, may repeat area of interest, and other electives can be selected based on resident interest

## Brief Description of Monthly Experiences

- Orientation: During this first rotational experience the resident will be orientated to the residency program including introductions to the health care system and to the pharmacy department systems and processes. The primary goal of orientation is for the resident to understand the basics of workflow and patient care for oncology, establish teaching and research expectations and understand the requirements of residency.
- Outpatient Oncology: This is a 8-week experience in which the resident will ensure patients are receiving appropriate drug therapy by completing patient interviews, performing medication counseling on new anti-neoplastic therapies and supportive care medications, and reviewing computerized medical records. The resident will also assist nursing and providers in providing or implementing supportive care measures that are appropriate for that individual patient. This rotation is repeated to allow the resident more time/experience with management/coordination activities for outpatient oncology in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the residency.
- Hem/Onc Consults: During this experience the resident will learn how to evaluate a patient with a new malignancy diagnosis and/or new treatment request to determine the best management according to guidelines, criteria for use and/or primary literature. The resident will work closely with hem/onc physicians by reviewing new cancer diagnoses in the inpatient and outpatient setting to determine the best treatment approach for that individual patient based on co-morbidities and performance status. This experience is repeated to allow the resident more independence with reviewing consults and helping coordinate treatment/therapy approvals in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the residency.
- CE/Residency Project: The purpose of the CE/Residency Project experience is to allow the resident time to complete their two major projects for the residency program. The resident communicates with their residency project and CE preceptors each week to assess their progress and discuss any issues.
- Palliative/Hospice Care: The resident will be responsible for evaluating and working closely with the palliative oncology patients admitted to the unit that may be having toxicities/issues with chemotherapy, radiation and/or their underlying cancer. The resident will be responsible for verifying electronic orders, providing discharge counseling and assisting with pharmacy related questions from nursing/providers on the unit.
- BMT: The resident will be involved in providing direct patient care to Marrow Transplant Unit (MTU) patients in collaboration with the multidisciplinary team at off-site VA (at Nashville, TN or VA Puget Sound Health Care System in Seattle, WA). Responsibilities include TPN management, making recommendations to optimize patients' drug therapy throughout the transplant process, and counseling opportunities.
- Gyn/Onc (virtual): The resident will participate with other PGY2 oncology pharmacy residents in a virtual didactic lecture series focused on gynecology oncology topics and will have the opportunity to present a journal club and discuss case presentations.

## Extended Experiences

- Oncology Staffing (one half day per week)
- Surgical Oncology
- Inpatient Oncology
- MUE
- Provider Newsletter
- Patient Newsletter
- PBM Experience (2)
- CE Presentation
- Oncology Investigational Research
- Management Conference (3)
- Journal Club (4)

## Longitudinal Experiences

- Teaching/Education
- Residency Project (block 1 & 2)
- Oral Anti-Neoplastic Clinic (one half day per week)
- Oncology Pharmacy Administration
- ADR Reporting

## Elective Opportunities

The resident may choose **two electives** during the residency year. This elective time is used to either tailor additional specific interests of the resident or to further improve upon an already completed rotation. Potential electives available include academia, informatics, hematology, ID, and mental health. Electives can also be designed based on the resident's interest and the resident may repeat a previous experience.

## Residency Project

A completed residency project is required during the residency program. The resident presents his or her project at a regional or national meeting, as well as submits a written finalized manuscript before the conclusion of the residency program in a format suitable for publication. A list of recently completed residency projects completed by PGY2 pharmacy residents is outlined below:

- Evaluation of cisplatin/gemcitabine/nab-paclitaxel versus gemcitabine/nab-paclitaxel in advanced/metastatic pancreatic cancer
- A Retrospective Review of Venous Thromboembolism Prophylaxis in Veterans Receiving Immunomodulatory Therapy for Multiple Myeloma: SAVED VETS Study
- Review of Efficacy and Safety Outcomes of Ibrutinib in a Veteran Population with Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia
- A multi-center retrospective study evaluating palliative antineoplastic therapy administered and medication de-escalation in Veteran cancer patients toward the end-of-life
- Cancer-associated thrombosis and bleeding in veterans on direct oral anticoagulants
- Use of targeted therapies for advanced renal cell carcinoma in the Veterans Health Administration

## Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA) Requirements

Please refer to the OAA requirements of Health Professions Trainees (HPTs): [Resources for Health Professions Trainees Coming to VA | Eligibility and Forms - Office of Academic Affiliations](#)

HPTs are appointed as temporary employees of the Department of Veteran Affairs. As such, HPTs are subject to law, policies, and guidelines posted for VA staff members. There are infrequent times in which this guidance can change during a training year which may create new requirements or responsibilities for HPTs. If employment requirements change during the course of a training year, HPTs will be notified of the change and impact as soon as possible and options provided. The Residency Program Director (RPD) will provide you with the information you need to understand the requirement and reasons for the requirement in a timely manner.

## Benefits

The residency stipend is \$45,704 and includes full federal healthcare benefits. Residents accumulate 13 days of paid vacation time, 13 days of paid sick time, and have 11 paid Federal holidays per year.

## Application Qualifications

- United States citizenship
- Doctor of Pharmacy degree from an American Council on Pharmaceutical Education (ACPE) accredited school of pharmacy
- Completion of an ASHP accredited PGY1 Pharmacy Residency
- Pharmacist licensure in any of the United States
- National Matching Service and Pharmacy Online Residency Centralized Application Service (PhORCAS) registration

## ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting

The SAVAHCS PGY1 and PGY2 Residency programs are participating in the ASHP Midyear Residency Showcase on the morning of Tuesday December 6, 2022. Please refer to the ASHP website for the latest information concerning the showcase: ASHP Residency Showcase ([ashp.org](http://ashp.org))

## SAVAHCS Pharmacy Residency Virtual Open House 2022

Please join the current Pharmacy Residents from both the PGY1 and PGY2 oncology programs, the Residency Program Directors, and other preceptors during the Virtual Open House!

When: [Thursday October 27, 2022 3:30 PM- 6:00 PM PST](#)

Where: Virtual forum via Webex platform

Meeting number: 2761 603 4402

Meeting password: VpmWJSS\*425

## Application Packet Requirements

**All application materials are due by [January 2<sup>nd</sup> 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time](#)**

- The SAVAHCS PGY2 Oncology Pharmacy Residency program participates in the Pharmacy Online Residency Centralized Application Service (PhORCAS). Please refer to the ASHP website for details. Incomplete applications are not considered for review.
- The PHORCAS application requirements include:
  - ✓ Cover letter or letter of intent specific to the SAVAHCS PGY2 Oncology residency program
  - ✓ Curriculum vitae
  - ✓ Official school of pharmacy transcripts
  - ✓ Three written references\*\*

**\*\*In addition to the PhORCAS application standard requirements, there are additional requirements for SAVAHCS that reference writers must complete. Each reference writer must provide comments for a minimum of 10 of the "Characteristics Evaluated" on the PhORCAS Standardized Reference form PLUS either complete the first three narrative comments on the PhORCAS form OR provide a traditional letter of reference that addresses the areas listed in the narrative questions. **These additional requirements must be communicated by the applicant to their references.****

Materials submitted by the candidate are subject to textual similarity review for detection of plagiarism.

*This residency site agrees that no person at this site solicits, accepts, or uses any ranking-related information from any residency applicant.*

## Interviews

Interviews for the Pharmacy Residency PGY2 class of 2024 will be conducted **virtually** from mid-January through February 2023. Potential candidates are invited to interview based on screened application packets (please see above regarding application packet requirements); the candidate may accept the offer to interview if he/she is willing to comply with the human resource (HR) requirements outlined in the interview offer letter. The interview is a panel-style interview with the program's pharmacy preceptors, current pharmacy resident as well as the pharmacy residency director. The candidate is expected to provide a 30-min virtual presentation on an oncology topic on the interview day. Once all the potential candidates are interviewed, the list is ranked and sent to the National Matching Service. The results are posted by the National Matching Service on the designated date.

## Commonly Asked Questions

Q: Do I need to be licensed in Arizona for the SAVAHCS residency?

A: For VA residencies, including SAVAHCS, you may obtain pharmacist licensure in any of the United States. It is not a requirement for you to be licensed specifically in Arizona for the SAVAHCS residency.

Q: I do not have US citizenship but have a green card. Am I eligible for the residency program?

A: Unfortunately, as a Federal Employer, we only accept residents with US citizenship. We are unable to accept potential residents with a green card.

Q: Do I need to complete an VA PGY1 pharmacy residency to apply to this program?

A: No, you do not need to complete a PGY1 VA residency to apply!



Q: What are the staffing requirements for this program?

A: Generally, this is once per week in the morning in the IV room overseeing compounding of chemotherapy and other anti-neoplastic therapies. Staffing consists of working together with technicians and other pharmacists in the inpatient pharmacy to triage clinical questions and preparing treatments as requested for hem/onc patients.

Q: May I do an elective experience that is not listed?

A: Elective experiences may be created on site if there is a qualified residency preceptor for that experience. Electives may potentially be arranged by the resident and RPD in advance (a minimum of six months in advance) for unestablished off-site elective. There are several factors involved for creating an elective off-site with a qualified residency preceptor (e.g. resident licensure, ability for SAVAHCS to contract with the off-site).

Q: Does the PGY2 program participate in early commitment?

A: SAVAHCS PGY2 program does not participate in early commitment with current PGY1 residents.

Q: Does the SAVAHCS PGY2 residency program involve teaching and/or offers teaching certificates?

A: The PGY2 residency program does offer a teaching certificate if resident is interested and did not receive one during PGY1 residency. The Pharmacy Resident Scholars in Teaching and Learning (PRSTL) program is offered and coordinated by the University of Arizona College of Pharmacy. Additionally, precepting and educational activities are longitudinal experiences during the residency program.

Q: Do you participate in CareerPharm's Personnel Placement Service (PPS) at the ASHP Clinical Midyear meeting?

A: We do not participate in PPS.

Q: Is it possible to speak with a current pharmacy resident?

A: Of course! Please email [Jana.Sawyer@va.gov](mailto:Jana.Sawyer@va.gov)

## Meet the SAVAHCS Pharmacy Team!

### Chief, Pharmacy Service

**Kristina De Los Santos, PharmD, BCPS** is the Chief, Pharmacy Service and has worked at SAVAHCS since graduating from the University of Arizona with her Doctor of Pharmacy degree in 1999. She was an inpatient pharmacist for one year and then completed a Pharmacy Practice Residency at SAVAHCS in 2001. She worked in various settings at SAVAHCS after completing residency training and assisted with oversight of residency program. In 2006 she became the Residency Program Director, Formulary Manager and eventually supervisor of the clinical pharmacists in ambulatory care. In 2012 she became the Chief, Pharmacy Service. Kristina was the founding leader of the Health Systems Academy of the Arizona Pharmacy Association in addition to a variety of other leadership positions. She has served on the Council on Pharmacy Practice, Committee on Nominations, Commission on Credentialing, House of Delegates, and as a guest surveyor for residency surveys for the American Society of Health Systems Pharmacists. She has served the Tucson community volunteering with the Junior League of Tucson and more recently her daughter's school. Kristina enjoys reading, baking, and spending time with her daughter.

### Residency Advisory Board (RAB) Members

**Pharmacy Education Program Manager and PGY1 Pharmacy Residency Program Director: Stephanie Davis, PharmD, BCACP** is the program manager for pharmacy education services and the PGY1 Residency Program Director. She received her Doctor of Pharmacy degree at the University of Arizona and completed a Pharmacy Residency at the Oregon Health Sciences University. After residency she landed at the Salt Lake City VA where she worked as an acute care pharmacist for the medicine teams, served as the residency coordinator, and developed her joy for hiking. She headed back to a warmer climate in 2000 by transferring to SAVAHCS. She established the role of a pharmacist in the Medical Subspecialty Clinic working in the clinic for 11 years. She transitioned to the administrative side of pharmacy initially as front-line supervisor at SAVAHCS in 2011 while maintaining a clinical practice with the Hepatitis C clinic. She became a member of the SAVAHCS residency program when it established in 2002 and became the RPD the Spring of 2013. She enjoys hiking, baking for the residents, being a guinea pig mom, and when too toasty to hike, tackle jigsaw puzzles.

**PGY2 Oncology Pharmacy Residency Program Director: Megan Banaszynski, PharmD, BCOP** has been a clinical hematology/oncology pharmacist at SAVAHCS since 2015 and the PGY-2 Oncology Pharmacy Residency Director since 2018. She completed her PGY-1 pharmacy residency as well as her PGY-2 oncology pharmacy residency at SAVAHCS. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin pharmacy school in 2013. She is a member of ASHP, HOPA and AHAVO. Megan also serves on the Residency Advisory Board. She precepts pharmacy students and

residents for the elective in oncology. In her spare time, Megan enjoys traveling, golfing and spending time with her two frenchies.

**Residency Coordinator: Alicia Newkirk, PharmD, BCACP** is a clinical pharmacy supervisor over the specialty ambulatory care pharmacy areas (mental health, oncology, medical subspecialties, pain, & centralized anticoagulation clinics). Alicia graduated from the University of Arizona in 2005 with a Doctor of Pharmacy degree and completed a PGY1 pharmacy residency at SAVAHCS in 2006. She worked in several ambulatory clinics prior to her current position. She serves on the Residency Advisory Board as the residency coordinator and recruitment chair. Outside of pharmacy, Alicia enjoys spending time with her family, go for long walks in the cooler Arizona evenings, and listen to audiobooks while cooking.

#### Meet the Oncology PGY2 Pharmacy Preceptors:

**Megan Banaszynski, PharmD, BCOP** (see above)

**Brian Do, PharmD, BCOP** is a clinical pharmacy specialist for hematology/oncology and is one of the main preceptors for the PGY2 oncology residency. He completed his PGY1 general pharmacy practice and PGY2 oncology residency training at SAVAHCS. Following residency, he became the clinical oncology pharmacy specialist for melanoma, sarcoma, genitourinary malignancies, and neuro-oncology at the University of Arizona Cancer Center. He rejoined the SAVAHCS pharmacy team as the clinical hematology/oncology pharmacist in 2018. He is a member of ASHP, HOPA, and AVAHO and serves as a preceptor for students and residents of the oncology elective. Brian is also involved in the oncology work group for the Electronic Health Record Modernization initiative. He enjoys good food, great movies, and spending time with his family. He is also an avid fan of the Arizona Wildcats (Bear Down!).

**Ryan M. Young, PharmD, BCPS** currently serves as the Inpatient Pharmacy Compounding Sterile Products Supervisor and is the main preceptor for the oncology staffing experience. He previously served as the inpatient pharmacy program manager for 3 years and then practiced as an inpatient ICU/surgical and infectious disease care pharmacist and still serves as a preceptor to pharmacy residents and students. He graduated from the University of Arizona College of Pharmacy in 2002 and completed a Pharmacy Practice Residency at The Southern Arizona VA Health Care System in 2003. He became a Board-Certified Pharmacotherapy Specialist in 2004. In 2005-2006 Ryan was called to active military duty and worked as a clinical pharmacy specialist for formulary management in the United States military. His interests include infectious diseases, acute pain management and critical care pharmacotherapy. He is a member of ASHP.

**Mark C. Geraci, Pharm.D., BCOP** is a National PBM Clinical Pharmacy Program Manager and a virtual preceptor for PGY-2 oncology residents. He completed a specialty oncology residency followed by clinical pharmacy positions with several academic medical centers and lecturing in the oncology unit of an integrated doctor of pharmacy program. He also precepted Doctor of Pharmacy students, PGY-1 pharmacy residents and a PGY-2 oncology resident before joining the VA Pharmacy Benefits Management Services in 2002. He serves on the VA Tobacco Cessation Technical Advisory Group, is a consultant to the VA Oncology Field Advisory Committee, and a consultant to the VA National Precision Oncology Program. He is a member of ASHP, HOPA and AVAHO and has served on and led committees as part of HOPA.

**Bernadette (Berni) Heron, B.S. Pharm., Pharm.D., BCOP** is a National PBM Clinical Pharmacy Program Manager that specializes in hematology/oncology for VHA Pharmacy Benefits Management (PBM) Formulary Management Services. Berni conducts clinical reviews and develops guidance documents for therapies that impact the Veteran cancer population. These documents provide information to facilitate national formulary decisions and assist field practitioners. Berni is an active member of the Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association (HOPA) and served as past-chair of the Standards Committee. She serves on the Board of the Association of VA Hematology/Oncology (AVAHO) and is also a member of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO). Berni is interested in drug safety among Veterans and their families, expanding roles of hem/onc pharmacists and value in cancer care. In her spare time, she like to merge fitness with fundraising.

**Sharon Thomas, PharmD** is the Pharmacy Formulary Program Manager at SAVAHCS. She obtained her PharmD from the University of Texas at Austin in 2017 and completed a Pharmacy Practice Residency at Methodist Dallas Medical Center. She went on to complete a PGY2 residency in Pharmacy Outcomes and Healthcare Analytics at the VA VISN 17 Pharmacy Benefits Management Office in Central Texas before coming to SAVAHCS. Sharon is a preceptor for the longitudinal MUE and formulary management rotations. She now works remotely from Texas and precepts residents virtually. Outside of work, she enjoys hiking, trying new food, and spending time with friends and family.

**Brandon LaMarr, PharmD, BCPS** currently works as the Pharmacy Informatics/QA manager. He received a BA in Biology from the University of Utah in 2005 and his Pharm.D. from the University of Colorado in 2009. He completed a PGY1 residency at SAVAHCS in 2010. He worked as an inpatient pharmacist for several years following residency. Outside of work, Brandon enjoys consuming print and electronic media, baked dessert items and wholesome family recreation.

**Mahendra Patel, PharmD, BCPS** is an ambulatory care clinical pharmacy practitioner in the Women's Health, Transgender & Gender Diverse, Geriatrics, and Ironwood Primary Care clinics. He completed a pharmacy practice residency in 2003 at the Southern Arizona VA Health Care System (SAVAHCS) and joined the pharmacy department the following year. He has completed the basic tobacco intervention skills program and tobacco dependence treatment program from the University of Arizona. He serves as the tobacco cessation lead clinician for SAVAHCS. Additionally, he is also an active member on the National VA Adverse Drug Event Reporting System Advisory Committee, facility multidisciplinary transgender team and national VA transgender interfacility e-consult team. Mahendra has been serving as a preceptor for SAVAHCS' pharmacy practice residency programs (PGY1 & PGY2) since 2003 and is a Clinical Instructor in Pharmacy Practice and Science at the University of Arizona College of Pharmacy since 2006. He enjoys spending countless hours with family, being an avid fan of basketball and football, coaching baseball/softball, traveling, hiking and working out.

**Jean Popham, PharmD** joined SAVAHCS in 1995 and is a Clinical Pharmacist in the Home Based Primary Care, focusing on geriatric care of homebound Veterans. She serves as the editor for the Oncology Patient Newsletter and sits on the Medication Management Committee. Mrs. Popham graduated from the University of Kansas in 1994 and completed a Pharmacy Practice Residency at SAVAHCS in 1995. She was named Outstanding Pharmacist of the Year by the Arizona Pharmacist Association in 1999. Her personal interests include visiting National Parks, hiking and volunteering with National Charity League of Tucson

**Stephanie Lee, PharmD, BCPP, BCPS** is a clinical pharmacy practitioner for the inpatient psychiatry and detoxification teams. She received her PharmD from the University of Arizona in 2015. Following her PGY-1 Pharmacy Practice Residency training at SAVAHCS, she went on to complete a PGY-2 Psychiatric Pharmacy Residency at the VA Loma Linda Healthcare System in Loma Linda, CA. Stephanie was then hired on to her current position in 2017. Her clinical interests include PTSD and substance use disorders, and she enjoys working closely with her providers on VA-wide campaigns such as the Psychotropic Drug Safety Initiative (PDSI) and Opioid Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution (OEND). Outside of work, she likes to spend her time playing board games and garment sewing.

**Jamie Chichester, PharmD, BCPS** joined SAVAHCS pharmacy in 2013 and has been the Surgery Clinic Pharmacist since 2015. After trying several different careers including teacher, secretary, and flight attendant, Jamie graduated from Philadelphia College of Pharmacy in 2012 and completed her PGY-1 pharmacy residency at Lebanon VA Medical Center in rural Pennsylvania. She obtained a Bachelors of Science in Education at Rockford University in 2002. She precepts IPPE students and the PGY-2 Pharmacy Oncology resident for the Oncology Surgery rotation. Gardening became her passion during the COVID-19 pandemic because she couldn't travel, and all her free time is spent with her adorable two little boys

## Current PGY2 Oncology Pharmacy Resident (Class of 2023)

**Jana Sawyer, PharmD** is a PGY2 Oncology Pharmacy Resident at SAVAHCS. She is originally from Gilbert, AZ but has lived in Tucson for the last 8 years. There, she completed a B.S. in Molecular and Cellular Biology and a PharmD, both from the University of Arizona. She completed her PGY1 pharmacy residency at SAVAHCS. After completion of her PGY2 program, she hopes to continue serving Veterans as an Oncology Clinical Pharmacy Practitioner. When she's not at SAVAHCS, she enjoys trying new restaurants and coffee shops, beating her friends at board games and card games, and exercising so she can justify trying all the new restaurants. She is also the #1 fan of Arizona's drive-thru salad restaurant: Salad and Go.

## Contact

For further information or questions, please contact:

**Megan Banaszynski, PharmD, BCOP**

Oncology Pharmacy Specialist

PGY-2 Oncology Pharmacy Residency Director

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